

Part I  
THE STORY OF FATIMA

On a cool spring day in 1916, Lucy dos Santos, age 9, and her cousins, Francisco and Jacinta Marto, ages 8 and 6 respectively, took their parents' sheep to pasture in a place not far from their homes in the mountain village of Fatima, Portugal, about 90 miles north of Lisbon. It started to drizzle, and the children sought shelter in a nearby cave. Suddenly across the field, a white globe of light appeared, moving over the open space toward the cave. The three children stared in awe as they saw in the center of the light a beautiful young man in flowing white garments.

The stranger began to speak: "*Fear not. I am the Angel of Peace. Pray with me.*" Kneeling on the ground, he bowed low and recited this prayer three times, with the children repeating it after him: "*O my God, I believe, I adore, I hope and I love Thee. I ask pardon for those who do not believe, do not adore, do not hope and do not love Thee.*"

In mid-summer, as the children were together, the Angel came again, and said, "*Pray! Pray a great deal. The Hearts of Jesus and Mary have merciful designs on you. Offer prayers and sacrifices continually to the Most High. Make everything you do a sacrifice, and*

*offer it as an act of reparation for the sins by which God is offended, and as a petition for the conversion of sinners. Bring peace to our country in this way . . . I am the Guardian Angel of Portugal. Accept and bear with submission all the sufferings the Lord will send you."*

The Angel came again in the fall of that same year, this time bearing a golden chalice in one hand and a Host above it in the other. The amazed children noticed that drops of blood were falling from the Host into the chalice. Presently the Angel left both suspended in mid-air and prostrated himself on the ground, saying this beautiful prayer: "*Most Holy Trinity—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit—I adore Thee profoundly. I offer Thee the most precious Body, Blood, Soul and Divinity of Jesus Christ, present in all the tabernacles of the world, in reparation for the outrages, sacrileges and indifferences whereby He is offended. And through the infinite merits of His Most Sacred Heart and the Immaculate Heart of Mary, I beg of Thee the conversion of poor sinners.*"

Such was the prelude to one of the most remarkable messages ever to be given from Heaven to Earth—the "peace plan" of Our Lady of Fatima.

#### THE LADY "MORE BRILLIANT THAN THE SUN"

On Sunday, May 13, 1917, slightly more than a year after the Angel's first visit, the children were pasturing their flocks as usual. This time they were in a rather barren hollow, known as the Cova da Iria (Hollow of Irene), which was about a mile from their homes. It was noon of a clear, sunny day, when suddenly a flash of lightning cut the air—then another. Fearing a storm, the

children quickly gathered the sheep to get them home. Then their glances fell upon a small holm-oak tree directly in their path. A dazzling light hovered over the topmost branches, when—wonder of wonders—what should they behold but the form of a lovely lady standing atop the tree in the light, her feet hidden in a shimmering cloud. She was like the Angel, only far more beautiful. She wore a long white dress, and the mantle over her head and shoulders reaching to her feet was edged in burnished gold. Her hands were joined before her breast, and from the right hand hung an exquisite rosary of white pearls. As Lucy later described her, *“She was a lady more brilliant than the sun.”*

After telling the children not to be frightened, the vision said: *“I come from Heaven. I want you to come here at this same hour on the 13th day of each month until October. Then I will tell you who I am and what I want.”* She also told them to say the Rosary every day, and to bear all the sufferings God would send them.

In June the Lady appeared again. There were about 70 people present, though only the children could see the apparition. She told the youngsters that many souls go to Hell because they have no one to pray and make sacrifices for them. She said Francisco and Jacinta would soon leave the world for Heaven. Holding out her heart surrounded by thorns which pierced it from all sides, Our Lady told Lucy: *“God wishes you to remain in the world for some time because He wants to use you to establish in the world the devotion to my Immaculate Heart. I promise salvation to those who embrace it, and their souls will be loved by God as flowers placed by myself to adorn His throne.”*

## THE CHILDREN SEE HELL

During her appearance in July, Our Lady, in answer to Lucy's plea, promised that in October she would work a great public miracle so that all might believe and know who she was. Again the Mother of God told the children to sacrifice themselves for sinners and to say many times, especially when making a sacrifice, this prayer: *"O my Jesus, I offer this for love of Thee, for the conversion of poor sinners, and in reparation for all the sins committed against the Immaculate Heart of Mary."*

As she spoke these words, Our Lady stretched out her hands, and bright rays came forth which seemed to penetrate into the earth. All at once the ground vanished, and the children found themselves standing on the brink of a sea of fire. As they peered into this dreadful place, the terrified youngsters saw huge numbers of devils and damned souls. The devils resembled hideous black animals, each filling the air with despairing shrieks. The damned souls were in their human bodies and seemed to be brown in color, tumbling about constantly in the flames and screaming with terror. All were on fire within and without their bodies, and neither devils nor damned souls seemed able to control their movements. They were tossing about in the flames like fiery coals in a furnace. There was never an instant's peace or freedom from pain.

Looking with compassion at the pale and trembling little ones, the vision spoke to them: *"You have seen Hell, where the souls of poor sinners go. To save them, God wishes to establish in the world the devotion to my*

*Immaculate Heart. If people do what I tell you, many souls will be saved and there will be peace."*

## THE VISION FORETELLS WORLD WAR II AND COMMUNISM

*"The war [First World War, then raging] is going to end. But if people do not stop offending God, another and worse one will begin in the reign of Pius XI. When you shall see a night illuminated by an unknown light [January 25, 1938], know that this is the great sign that God gives you that He is going to punish the world for its many crimes by means of war, hunger, and persecution of the Church and the Holy Father.*

*"To prevent this, I shall come to ask for the consecration of Russia to my Immaculate Heart and the Communion of Reparation on the five first Saturdays. If my requests are granted, Russia will be converted and there will be peace. If not, she will scatter her errors throughout the world, provoking wars and persecution of the Church. The good will be martyred, the Holy Father will have much to suffer, and various nations will be destroyed . . .*

*". . . But in the end, my Immaculate Heart will triumph, the Holy Father will consecrate Russia to me, Russia will be converted, and a certain period of peace will be granted to the world."* The Lady asked that this message be kept secret until she gave permission to reveal it.

## THE CHILDREN ARE JAILED

The apparitions rapidly were creating so much excitement that the atheistic civil authorities became alarmed. At the next scheduled appearance of the Lady, August 13th, though more than 15,000 people were waiting in the Cova, the atheistic mayor of Ourem, under whose jurisdiction Fatima belonged, had the children kidnaped and placed in jail. In spite of his threats to have them burnt alive in boiling oil, the children refused to reveal the secret given to them. Fearing violence from the people, the mayor released Lucy and her cousins the next day. Near the village of Valinhos on August 19th, the Lady appeared to the children again. She told them she was greatly displeased by the action of the mayor. As a result, the miracle promised for October would not be as impressive as originally planned.

More than 30,000 people were present in September, and saw a shower of mysterious white petals fall to within 10 feet of the ground before dissolving into the air. Many also saw the globe of light bearing the Lady come to rest atop the tree, and the branches bend as though someone were standing on them. Later, they saw the cloud depart into the east, from whence it had come.

## 70,000 GATHER FOR THE PROMISED MIRACLE

By now, all Portugal was stirred by the events taking place at Fatima, suddenly the most important spot in the land. Particularly were the newspapers interested, especially in the statement that a great miracle was to take place. Many reporters and photographers were on hand

to record the events, or to prove that the statements were nothing more than lies.

On the days preceding October 13th, all roads led to Fatima, with people coming from all parts of the land in any form of transportation they could find. Many walked for miles over the rough fields. It rained all the night of the 12th and the morning of the 13th. By noon, more than 70,000 had crowded into the Cova. Standing in mud up to their ankles, they huddled together under umbrellas, seeking protection from the relentless rain as they prayed their rosaries.

Shortly after noon the Lady arrived for her final appearance. She told the children:

*“I am the Lady of the Rosary. I have come to warn the faithful to amend their lives and to ask pardon for their sins. They must not offend Our Lord any more, for He is already too grievously offended by the sins of men. People must say the Rosary. Let them continue saying it every day.”*

## THE SUN WHIRLS IN THE SKY

As the Lady was about to leave, she pointed to the sun. Lucy excitedly repeated the gesture, and the people looked into the sky. The rain had ceased, the clouds parted, and the sun shone forth, but not in its usual brilliance. Instead, it appeared like a silver disc, pale as the moon, at which all could gaze without straining their eyes. Suddenly, impelled by some mysterious force, the disc began to whirl in the sky, casting off great shafts of multicolored light. Red, green, blue, yellow, violet—the

enormous rays shot across the sky at all angles, lighting up the entire countryside for many miles around, but particularly the upturned faces of those 70,000 spell-bound people. After three minutes the wonder stopped, but was resumed again a second and a third time—three times in all—within about 12 minutes. It seemed that the whole world was on fire, with the sun spinning at a greater speed each time.

Then a gasp of terror rose from the crowd, for the sun seemed to tear itself from the heavens and come crashing down upon the horrified multitude. *“It’s the end of the world!”* shrieked one woman. *“Dear God, don’t let me die in my sins!”* implored another. *“Holy Virgin, protect us!”* cried a third. All were on their knees in terror, asking pardon for their sins. Just when it seemed that the ball of fire would fall upon and destroy them, the miracle ceased and the sun resumed its normal place in the sky, shining forth as peacefully as ever.

When the people arose from the ground, cries of astonishment were heard on all sides. Their clothes, which had been soaking wet and muddy, now were clean and dry. Many of the sick and crippled had been cured of their afflictions.

## THE CHILDREN ENJOY SPECIAL VISIONS

While the miracle of the sun was taking place, the children alone were privileged to witness several remarkable visions in the heavens. As Our Lady had promised, St. Joseph had come with the Holy Family and he had blessed the world. Then, Our Lady appeared as the Mother of Sorrows, accompanied by her Divine

Son, who also blessed the world. Finally, Lucy had seen the Blessed Virgin Mary, dressed in the brown robes of Our Lady of Mount Carmel, crowned as Queen of Heaven and Earth, holding a brown Scapular in her hand, with her infant Son upon her knee. However, in none of these visions had any of the figures spoken to the children.

Truly, it had been a great day for Portugal. The reporters, many of whom had come to scoff, gave long and detailed accounts of what had taken place, while the newspapers published many photographs of the great crowds and of the children. Although these were released to the entire world (copies are on file in the U.S. Congressional Library), few people outside Portugal paid any attention to these events, and newspapers in most other countries ignored the story completely.

## Part II

### SUBSEQUENT IMPORTANT EVENTS

As the Blessed Mother had promised, Francisco and Jacinta soon joined her in Heaven. The little boy died from the flu in April, 1919 and his sister from pleurisy in February, 1920.

Before she died, little Jacinta revealed some little-known but remarkable statements made by Our Lady of Fatima. Here are some of them:

*“More souls go to Hell because of sins of the flesh than for any other reason.”*